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MOLINA ANNOUNCES FOOD STAMPS FOR 10,000 FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Molina Efforts Aim to Assist Families in Need and to Prevent Further Homelessness

LOS ANGELES COUNTY (May 19, 2006) -- As part of her effort for the County to take the necessary steps to help families who suddenly find themselves jobless and in need due to the downturn in the economy, Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina today requested that the County aggressively reach out to the individuals -- who under AB 433 will no longer be required to have an asset limit to qualify for food stamps.

Molina's motion directs the County to initiate an immediate outreach implementation plan to AB 433 (Beall) to ensure more families who are eligible receive food stamps. This will make sure that the County through its departments do aggressive outreach to enroll families.

"As more and more people lose their jobs and search for new ones in a shrinking job market, many families are finding themselves, often for the first time, with inadequate funds to pay their rent/mortgage, keep their utilities, and provide food for their children," said Molina. "I am talking about people who have been gainfully employed most of their adults lives, and have paid into the public assistance safety net—and now, they just need temporary help – they do not want to become a permanent burden to our public assistance system. They are asking – where is the help for them during their economic crisis."

Molina hopes to prevent further homelessness, disruption to children and families and prevent adding to the County's existing caseload. In her district alone:

- There are 1,900 homeless families
- 200 families who sought refuge in motels through the Winter Shelter Program
- 7,263 individuals who lost jobs -- and the numbers continue to grow

Molina said, "In these troubling economic times, the idea that we would force someone to sell their car, or home, so they can eat or not go homeless is unacceptable. Under AB 433, L.A. County alone will be able to provide food for an additional 10,000 households and I look forward to us moving quickly so that more families can have food on the table."

Currently, if a family has assets, such as a savings account, of more than \$2,000, they do not qualify for food stamps. Now, families will be exempt from the asset test and will no longer find themselves forced to spend down their savings to qualify for public assistance – as long as they meet the income limits.

AB 433 will help an additional 32,000 households receive federal food stamp benefits statewide, and in L.A. County 10,000.

Last month, Molina and her colleagues directed the County lobbyists to seek temporary waivers or legislative fixes to help out families.

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